

## COMMENTARY

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AIRLIFT  
Dispatch

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## Fiscal year closeout is upon us

By Col. Rusty Findley  
437 AW commander

The enlisted dining-out on Saturday was a great event. We had a packed house and it was evident to me that everyone had a lot of fun. A special thanks to Master Sgt. Tracy Brewster and all the committee members for their outstanding efforts. Chief Master Sgt. Samuel Whalum, Jr., commandant of the Senior NCO Academy at Gunter Annex, Ala., shared truly inspiring words.

On any given day, Charleston's appearance always looks great and I want to thank everyone for the great job they do in keeping the base looking good. It really looked its best for Gen. Charles "Tony" Robertson, commander-in-chief of U.S. Transportation Command and commander of Air Mobility Command, during his visit to the base recently. Thanks to the 437th Support Group deputy commander, Lt. Col. Connie Davis, Lt. Col. Jon Roop and members of the 437th Civil Engineer Squadron and everybody who pitched in to make the base look good.

I was honored to welcome many former prisoners of war at a picnic Sept. 15. They, more than any other group that I can think of, have a very special appreciation for the freedoms we enjoy, having endured the hardships of being held against their will under some difficult conditions. Freedom is not free and they gave their best for our country. What a great bunch of heroes. See the story on page 11 to learn about some of their sacrifices.

We had a great turnout for the Hispanic Heritage

luncheon Monday, as the club was filled to capacity. This was their kick-off event and Master Sgt. Edison Velez, Jr. and the Hispanic Heritage committee did an outstanding job. The comments by retired Chief Master Sgt. Joseph Parsons were well-received by the audience and everyone had a great time. See the article on page 12 for details. Look for more on upcoming events in the coming weeks.

The base chaplain hosted commanders and first sergeants for a luncheon Sept. 14. The free lunch was designed to explain various chapel programs and the different services they provide that can help commanders and first sergeants take care of their people. The lunch also provided the chaplain's office with an opportunity to thank the squadron commanders and their first sergeants for all the good things they do for their people. A big thanks to Chaplain (Capt.) Dan Morey and Staff Sgt. Tasha Palmer for organizing the luncheon and informational briefings.

The 437th Contracting, Supply and Comptroller Squadrons are gearing up for the fiscal year closeout. It is one of the busiest periods for those three squadrons as they prepare to spend our remaining funds and prepare for the start of a new fiscal year Oct. 1. Because of their extensive planning and preparations, I know we'll have another highly successful closeout for the fiscal year.

We all got a good "wake-up" call when Tropical Storm Gordon threatened us with high winds and heavy rains. It was a



Photo by Lt. Col. Ed Memi

Col. Rusty Findley, 437th Airlift Wing commander, speaks at the POW/MIA Appreciation Day picnic Sept. 15.

surprise to see the storm come up from the gulf when we usually expect them to track from the Atlantic Ocean. Fortunately, the storm wore itself out before reaching us and had no impact on our operations. The lesson learned is hurricane season goes through November and we should not let down our guard, as the storms are difficult to predict. It is easy to become complacent, but it doesn't take long for another tropical depression to turn into a hurricane and threaten us again. Please ensure you know what to do when a hurricane threatens our area. A special thanks to our entire weather shop for keeping the wing informed of these types of storms and for providing quality forecasts. Tech. Sgt. Daniel Moran did an especially good job tracking and forecasting Gordon's path and intensity. We appreciate what all of you do!

Col. Bob Allardice, 437th Operations Group commander, led Large Package Week at Pope AFB, N.C. this past week. We sent a total of three aircraft up there to practice our large formation airdrops with other airlift

wings. We worked extensively with the 82nd Airborne Division from Fort Bragg, N.C. A bunch of maintainers and aircrews got some good training and experience from LPW.

We're gearing up for a visit on Sunday from Maj. Gen. and Mrs. John D. Hopper, Jr., 21st Air Force commander, at McGuire AFB, N.J. This will be his farewell visit to Charleston before assuming command as the vice commander of Air Education and Training Command, Randolph AFB, Texas. We'll get the chance to thank him and Mrs. Hopper for all the great things they've done for Charleston and our command. During his stay, he'll visit the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps detachment at the Citadel, Civil Engineer complex, 14th Airlift Squadron, Office of Very Cool Stuff, First Term Airman's Center, Airman Leadership School and receive a number of briefings before leaving after lunch on Monday.

I'm sure he'll be impressed once again with the premier airlift wing on the face of the planet. I know I am!

## Action Line

The Commander's Action line is your direct link to me. It's your opportunity to make Charleston Air Force Base a better place to live, work and play.

First give the appropriate base agency a chance to solve the problem, but if you don't get a satisfactory answer, call me at 963-5581 or send an e-mail to [action@charleston.af.mil](mailto:action@charleston.af.mil).

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